

# SAFETY AWARENESS

Brief Topic Safety Refresher Training For Associates

2024

## Playground Liability and Safety

Playgrounds are an important part of young children's educational environment. They allow kids to exercise and expel excess energy so they can better focus in the classroom. However, playgrounds are commonly the site of many injuries, ranging in severity from minor to serious. As an educational institution, you need to balance keeping playground facilities safe, while still facilitating important developmental play, and protect the liabilities that you're exposed to by having a playground on your property.

### Duty of Care

Some lawsuits related to school playground injury have centered on negligence due to lack of proper supervision. While not practical that a teacher or playground monitor can keep his or her eyes on every single student at every moment the students are on the playground, they are expected to exhibit a reasonable level of adequate supervision. The duty to provide safe play areas and proper supervision should be placed on those responsible for operating playgrounds.

The duty of care owed by a playground operator is the degree of care that a person of ordinary prudence charged with similar duties would exercise in the same circumstances. The law requires the school to exercise the same standard of care toward its students as would a reasonably prudent parent under comparable circumstances. Further, in providing the highest duty of care to students, schools must exercise due care to prevent unreasonable risk of harm to the child from playground equipment and other playground site hazards

### Safe Playground Design

It's important for children to play on age-appropriate gear so that they do not injure themselves on improperly sized equipment. Playgrounds are ultimately safest when equipment is selected for the age of the children using it. When designing a playground for children of all ages, equipment should be separated into three distinct groups: for children under age 2, for 2- to 5-year-olds, and for 5- to 12-year olds.

Other safety considerations that should be taken into account when planning a playground area include:

- Items with moving parts (such as seesaws and swings) should be located in a separate area and allow for ample space for the moving parts.
- Minimize the number of spaces that could trap a child's head, arms or legs. All openings (such as rungs on a ladder) should be either less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.

Wooden equipment should not be cracked or splintered. Any cracked or splintered equipment requires immediate attention for repair

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Schools must balance keeping playgrounds safe, while still allowing for important developmental play, and protecting the liability that comes with operating a playground.

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